

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 16 and 19 as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of forming a gate oxide layer on a semiconductor substrate

A<sup>2</sup> comprising:

forming an oxide layer on the substrate by oxidizing the substrate in a chemical vapor deposition furnace;

introducing nitric oxide (NO) gas into the chemical vapor deposition furnace; and

nitriding the oxide layer in the presence of the nitric oxide gas.

A<sup>3</sup> 16. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least 1.5 wt.% of N is incorporated into the oxide layer during the nitriding step.

19. (Amended) A method of nitriding a gate oxide layer on a semiconductor substrate comprising:

A<sup>4</sup> nitriding the gate oxide layer in the presence of nitric oxide (NO) gas;

wherein the nitriding step is conducted at a temperature of about 800°C or less and at a pressure of about 1 atm or less in a chemical vapor deposition furnace.

### REMARKS

Upon entry of the above claim amendments, Claims 1-23 will remain pending in this application. The amendment to Claims 1 and 16 is typographical in nature. Support for the amendment to Claim 19 can be found at page 9, lines 17-22 and throughout the specification.

No new matter is incorporated by this Amendment.